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Geography Newsletter

Department of Geography

2012

Geography Newsletter, 2011-2012

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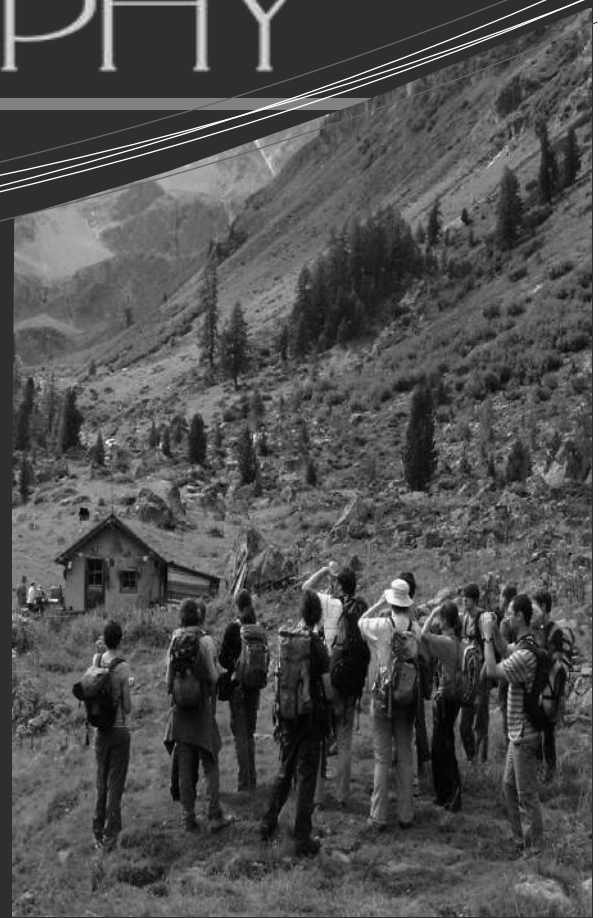
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UNI GEOGRAPHY

2011-2012 NEWSLETTER



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Student/Community Engagement

In the past two years, Alex Oberle has taught “Regional Analysis and Planning” as a service learning course where students engage in a real-world project that supports a local organization. In this case, this course enlists students in a collaborative project that directly sup-



ports the Grout Museum’s “Sharing the Farm Story” project which is part of the museum’s larger “Voices of Iowa” series. Students support this project by working in teams to analyze land use change at urban fringe of the Waterloo-Cedar Falls metropolitan area. Student activities include interviews of local farmers, GIS/cartography techniques to document land use change, archival research, and a field survey of farm structures. Since one of the many themes in planning is historic preservation, this project fits quite well with the larger goal of the class.

Last year, students explored the Orange Township which is on the south side of Waterloo and, in fact, used to include the area of Waterloo around Covenant Hospital and Crossroads Mall. Through the project, students either contributed to a poster or a grant proposal. The poster includes historic land use change maps, the location of farms, and some photographs from the farmer interviews. The grant proposal

is designed to solicit future funding to scale this project out to all of Black Hawk

County and is written in the format of the Black Hawk County Gaming Association, a local funder that uses a portion of Isle of Capri Casino revenue to provide grants for community needs in Black Hawk and adjoining counties.

This year, a new cohort of students is working on the same project but in the Cedar Falls Township which includes areas just to the west and south of UNI all the way to the Grundy County line and about Highway 20. In particular, the students are focusing on the area around Prairie Lakes Park and the industrial park. I’m sure this group of committed students will follow last year’s example and produce an excellent poster and narrative.

I’d like to thank both years’ students for their hard work and enthusiasm on this project and I also thank Bob Nemeyer (Grout Museum), Candy Streed (Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area) and the many farm families who allowed us into their homes for interviews. I thank the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost at UNI for providing initial support for this project.

New Internship with Aerial Services

The Department of Geography has partnered with Aerial Services, Inc. to establish the *Aerial Services Geography Intern Scholar Program*. The internship program provides a mutually beneficial work experience for students during each semester. The internships carry course credit and pay students a salary. They are available to UNI students in the Geography Department. Interns primarily work at the Cedar Falls location in GIS data production, GIS quality control, research innovations, and cartography.



Spotlight on Research

Dennis Dahms finds evidence of climate change in Rocky Mountain sediments.

When not teaching Soil Geography or Environmental Geography, Dr. Dennis Dahms remains active in his research on Quaternary geochronology and glacial history of the Rocky Mountain region of Wyoming. Dr. Dahms collaborated with colleagues from the Trinity College (CT) and the University of Minnesota on a number of projects to describe the climate/landform history of the western U.S.

Dr. Dahms and his colleagues presented a paper at the Fall meeting of the *American Geophysical Union* in San Francisco reporting the patterns of sediment accumulation in two Wyoming lakes that appear to match the sequence of the Pacific El Niño phenomenon as long ago as ~25,000 years. If confirmed, this is the earliest record of a connection between El Niño and the interior of North America between New England and California.

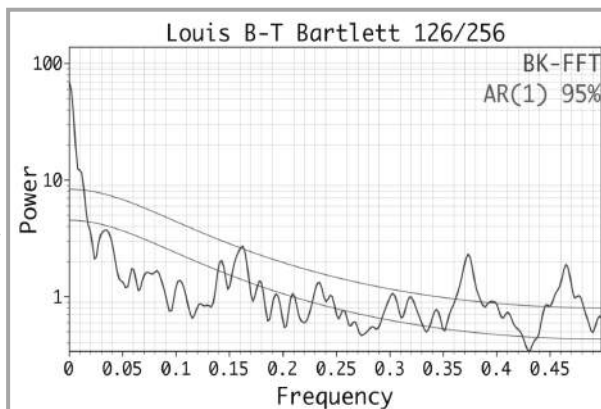
In 2010, Dr. Dahms was invited to be a visiting faculty for the University of Zürich's Geochronology Field School held each September in the Swiss Alps. Ph.D students from every country in Europe and many other countries attended the school. Dr. Dahms' says that his job is to give the

Ph.D-level students a view of Quaternary glacial geochronology and soil stratigraphy as seen from the U.S. perspective.

Dr. Dahms also hosted an international visitor this year. Dr. Markus Egli is a Professor of Glaciology, and Geochronology in the Physical Geography Division at the University of Zürich (Switzerland). Dr. Egli visited Dr. Dahms in May to collaborate on a series of projects comparing land-

mulation rates of oxybate-extractable phases derived from alpine chronosequences of up to 1Ma in age" (*Geomorphology*) and "Soil organic carbon and nitrogen accumulation rates in cold and alpine environments over 1Ma" (*Geoderma*) compare details of past soil development over long periods of time, in order to predict what changes might be expected to occur in these regions under conditions of continued climate warming in high altitude locations.

During the Fall semester 2012, the Geography Department will host Dr. Christian Mavris, a post-doctoral researcher from the University of Zürich. Dr. Mavris will visit under the auspices of a grant to Dr. Dahms and Dr. Egli from the Swiss National Science Foundation to study how changes in soil weathering in alpine regions might impede (or) enhance the ability of different tree species to migrate to higher elevations under the warmer climate conditions predicted to occur over the next 50-100 years.



Power spectra representing repeating patterns of varve thickness in the Wyoming lake data from >25,000 yrs (right) to the present (left). The data show a high correlation between varve thickness variations and El Niño patterns (typically 0.125-to-0.4 or 2.1-to-3.3 years). Statistically significant power is shown relative to the 95% and 99% confidence intervals.

form development and soil characteristics between the Swiss Alps and the U.S. Rocky Mountains of Wyoming. Their collaboration resulted in two publications that represent further interpretations of the glacial landforms both have studied in their respective regions over the past decade. The papers "Soil weathering and accu-



Dr. Markus Egli from University of Zürich

2012 Awards Banquet

University of Northern Iowa Purple and Old Gold Award for Meritorious Scholarship



Awarded by the University upon recommendation from the Department of Geography to a graduating senior of outstanding quality.

Susan Meerdink

NCGE's 2011-2012 Award for Excellence of Scholarship

Awarded by the National Council for Geographic Education in conjunction with the Association of American Geographers to graduating seniors of outstanding quality.



Derek Richards

**Jordan
Wessling**



Department of Geography Award for Distinguished Service

Awarded to students for substantial and meritorious service, through actions and allegiance to the Department of Geography.

Bernard Conrad Susan Meerdink
Aimee Winter James Crawford
Jonathon Launspach
Robert Stephens



Department of Geography/GTU Annual Academic Certificate of Achievement



Awarded by the Department of Geography to a graduating senior of outstanding quality.

Bernard Conrad

Annual Outstanding Undergraduate Research in Geography Award

Awarded to students for published and/or presented research during the academic year.

**Bernard Conrad,
Susan Meerdink,
Jordan Wessling**



New Inductees

Gamma Theta Upsilon Honor Society



**Brian Swedberg, Daniel Murphy,
Irina Childinova, Aimee Winter,
Bernard Conrad**

Scholarships

Thanks to generous contributions from departmental alumni and sponsors, Geography students can receive a number of scholarships. In 2012 the Department awarded scholarships to the following individuals:

Edna L. Padovan Geography Scholarship

Kara Poppe, Alyssa Holt

Janice Clark Memorial Scholarship

Chad Dentlinger

James & Connie Schuerman Scholarship

Irina Childinova

NASA Iowa Space Grant Scholarship

Jonathon Launspach, Jordan Wessling,
Susan Meerdink, Hannah Overton

Congratulations Winners!

2012 Awards Banquet

UNI Geography Outstanding Alumnus Award

Each year at our awards banquet we recognize a graduate who has made an impact in the field of geography and has represented our department with distinction. This year the Outstanding Alumnus Award was given to Dr. Michael Applegarth. Mike came to UNI in 1994 after receiving his B.A. from the University of Northern Arizona. Mike studied under Dr. Dahms and earned his M.A. in Physical Geography in 1997 with his thesis "Soil Catenas of calcareous tills, Whiskey Basin, Wyoming" which won UNI's 'Outstanding Thesis Award' for that year. Mike went on to earn his Ph.D with Drs. Ron Dorn and Will Graf at Arizona State University in 2001. Mike is presently an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography and Earth Science at Shippensburg University, Pennsylvania. We feel Mike is a worthy recipient for this year's award as he is an especially good example of how a 'non-traditional' student can persevere to a high level in their chosen profession. Congratulations, Mike.



Thomas Fogarty Retires after 23 years of service



Professor Tom Fogarty is retiring after 23 years of being a tenured Professor of Geography and Public Policy at the University of Northern Iowa. Tom joined the Geography faculty in July 1989 as the first Director of Public Policy, a new, interdisciplinary program on campus that was envisioned by then President Curris and former College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Dean Deagan. I remember Tom's interview presentation; it was clear, understandable, well-illustrated, and not laden with jargon. Tom would be an asset to UNI, not just as a Director, but also as a teacher. In his first year as Director, Tom was given four new Public Policy positions. Geography benefited from one of these positions; Dennis Dahms was hired in the summer of 1990 as an Environmental Geographer.

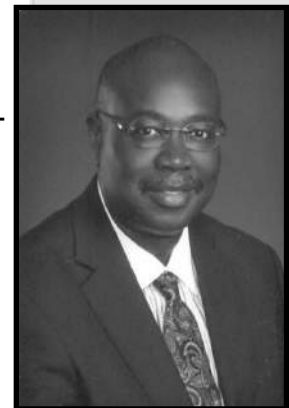
Over the years Tom has taught Political Geography, Geopolitics, Natural Hazards and Disasters, World Geography, Democracies (a team-taught Liberal Arts Core class), as well as a Seminar in Public Policy. Tom was one of the first in the Department to learn and use WebCT-the precursor to the present eLearning system-in his classes.

Tom is an intellectual who is always ready to engage in a conversation based on something he has read recently. This earned him the respect of his colleagues across campus and of his graduate students. Tom advised many Geography graduate students in geopolitical issues during his long career at UNI, as well as many, many Public Policy graduate students. He will be remembered for his intellect, his teaching based on stories, his sense of humor, and as a leader within the Department, College, and University.

—Written by Dave May

Dr. Henry Owusu Publishes a new book

Dr. Owusu's peer-reviewed book, *"Africa, Tropical Timber, Turfs and Trade: Geographic Perspectives on Ghana's Timber Industry"* is scheduled to be published this summer by Lexington Books (A Division of the Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group). The book examines development issues, particularly spatial integration, in Sub-Saharan Africa with respect to the tropical timber trade, and the related dynamics of formal and informal operational turf creation and control. With a primary focus on Ghana, it examines the scramble for the control of the turfs by various political and socio-economic interest groups, starting from the colonial period to the neo-liberal era, and identifies and distills the lessons that can be learned from Ghana's experience for the benefit of students and practitioners of Development in Ghana and comparable African and other Developing countries in the 21st Century. The book will also be published as an electronic (e-book) format.



Dr. Owusu also published a peer-reviewed book chapter, *"Conflict and Cooperation among the Riparian Countries of the Volta River Basin in West Africa: A Geographic Perspective"* in *"Water Resource Conflicts and International Security: A Global Perspective,"* edited by Prof. Dharendra Vajpeyi of UNI's Political Science Department last December.

Student Publications and Presentations

Dr. Andrey Petrov and graduate student Philip Cavin publish in *Polar Record*

Petrov, A. and Cavin, P. 2012. "Creative Alaska: Creative capital and economic development opportunities in Alaska"

Student Research Presented at Conferences this year

Philip Cavin

- The Changing Dynamics of Creative Capital the Northwest Territories, In Canada (1991-2006), Akureyri, Iceland, 2011
- Engaging Cultural Capital: Arctic 'Bohemia' as a Factor of Regional Development, New York City, NY 2012
- Knowledge for Action: Knowledge Stock and Human Capital for regional Development in the Arctic, Montreal, Canada, 2012
- Comparing LiDAR-Derived 3D dasymetric techniques with traditional dasymetric methods, Chicago, IL, 2012
- Using Airborne LiDAR Data and 3D Dasymetric Mapping Technique to Enhance Population Distribution Maps in Densely Urbanized Areas, Des Moines, IA, Marshalltown, IA, & Cedar Falls, IA, 2011

Jonathon Launspach

- Climate Change, Tundra Wildfires and Arctic Livelihoods: A Spatio-temporal analysis of recent trends and possible impacts, Akureyri, Iceland & Urbana-Champaign, IL, 2011
- Analyzing Spatiotemporal Dynamics of Arctic Wildfires Using MODIS Data., Cedar Falls, IA, 2011
- Along with Andrey Petrov, Climate Change, Tundra Wildfires and Arctic Livelihoods: A Spatio-temporal analysis of recent trends and possible impacts, New York, NY 2011
- Climate Change, Wildfires and Reindeer in Northern Eurasia: Modeling Impacts of Possible Wildfire Increase on Domestic and Wild Reindeer Habitats in Yamal-Nenets and western Taimyr Regions, Montreal, Canada, 2012

Susan Meerdink

- Long-term implications of the "ethanol boom" for the American agriculture: Iowa case study, Urbana, IL & Marshalltown, IA, 2011
- Taimyr wild reindeer spatial fidelity and calving ground dynamics in a changing climate, New York City, NY, Des Moines, IA, & Urbana-Champaign, IL, 2012

Bernard Conrad

- Urban Stormwater Planning Utilizing LIDAR, The WinSLAMM Model, and GIS. New York City, NY, 2012

Hanna Overton

- Corn boom in Iowa: Space Monitoring of Short- and Long-term Implications for Iowa's Agriculture, Cedar Falls, IA, 2012

Robert Stephens, Philip Cavin, and Andrey Petrov

- 3D Intelligent Dasymetric Mapping: A Comparative Analysis of 3D and 2D Techniques, New York, NY, 2012